

The
Final Report
of the

Newark in the 21st Century Task Force



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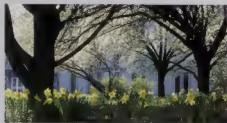


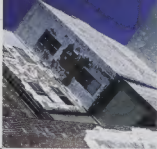
**The Final Report of the
Newark in the 21st Century Task Force
November 2000**

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Newark, New Jersey



Individuals engaged in a variety of activities in Newark were asked to comment on their vision of Newark in the period ahead. Their pictures and comments are found on the pages that follow.





Acknowledgments

The Task Force could not have completed its work without the support and cooperation of many individuals. Newark city officials, neighborhood and community leaders, and members of the business and academic communities have provided helpful information, different perspectives, and useful critiques as the Task Force explored Newark's current condition and future prospects. We are grateful for the assistance they gave so freely.

The Newark philanthropic community deserves a special word of thanks for making possible the work of the Task Force. Indeed, the Fund for New Jersey took the lead in proposing and generating support for the creation of the Task Force. The Fund's efforts were rewarded when the Prudential, PSE&G, MCJ, and Victoria Foundations agreed to participate in funding the Task Force. They were later joined in this by the Lucent Technologies Foundation. These foundations realized that the time had come to begin focusing less on Newark's past and more on its future possibilities. They believed, and we concur, that Newark has begun to reassert itself as an economic and cultural force in the region and that local political, community, business, and civic leaders must come together to determine how to maximize the possibilities embodied in the city's improving fortunes. We appreciate the vision and commitment to Newark these foundations provide.



The Task Force has been ably assisted by a number of individuals who served as staff. The central staff was composed of Richard W. Roper, president of the Roper Group, who served as executive director, and prepared the group's interim and final reports, and Lucia Crossley, administrative director. Before becoming dean of Seton Hall School of Law, Patrick Hobbs served

one year as program director for the Task Force. This team was assisted by several graduate students: Vivian Lu and Jenny Kao, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University; Tonya Woodland-Myers, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University; Lauri Herbert and Kerry Mead, Seton Hall School of Law; Lauren Murph, Seton Hall University; Purnima Metha, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; and Adam Giuliano, Yale University. Phylis Peterman, D.S.W., provided data collection and interviewing assistance during the preparation of the Task Force report. Roger Cohen edited the report, proof-reading was performed by Richard Cummerieri and Willa Speiser. Staff of the Partnership for New Jersey provided important technical assistance to the Task Force as it began to organize to fulfill its mission. The Task Force appreciates the contribution of each of these individuals to the successful completion of its work.



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Foreword

For all its well-documented travails, the City of Newark asserts a compelling pull on those who have experienced or followed its shifting fortunes over the years. Newark residents have demonstrated a determined loyalty to their city, enduring private-sector disinvestment and media depiction as a community in distress. But loyalty to the city and interest in its well-being are not limited solely to the city's residents, businesses, and workforce. Indeed, Newark's future is recognized as a matter of genuine importance by a wide-ranging and diverse public:

- Some of this interested public are suburbanites whose roots in Newark, though a generation or two removed, command their loyalty.
- Some care deeply about Newark's "minority-majority" political culture and its role as one of the first Northeast industrial cities where African-Americans rose to the highest positions of political authority.
- Still others see Newark as New Jersey's urban crossroads—the downtown heartbeat of a suburban state that struggles to define its identity.

And then there are those writers and urban experts who are troubled by the contradiction of Newark's condition: surrounded as it is by such wealth and prosperity, how can Newark *not* be lifted by this tide? Is it possible that disinvestment has gone on for so long that the region's good fortune only serves to further marginalize the state's largest city?

Herein lies a paradox, the resolution of which may well decide Newark's future. For the better part of 30 years, it has grown increasingly clear that Newark will not be rescued, except by the will and effort of its own resources, supported by the interested public described above. And yet, it is also evident that this effort cannot be successful without Newark engaging fully in the wider region that it so often is estranged from politically and economically.

The City of Newark today is abuzz with new optimism and unmistakable signs of promise for the future. All those who care about that future are hopeful—none more than the residents of the city. But we have all seen past moments of optimism and hope come to little. To ensure a better outcome this time, Newark and those who care about it must find a way to reconcile the need for autonomy and self-reliance with the capacity to be a full partner with the state as a whole and the wider region of which Newark ought to and must be a major part.

Introduction

The Newark in the 21st Century Task Force was created in the summer of 1997 to examine and evaluate Newark's prospects as the new millennium approached. The moment marked the thirtieth anniversary of the civil disturbances of 1967 that had left the city so damaged socially, physically, and psychologically. The occasion prompted many civic-oriented organizations and citizens to reflect on Newark's past, present, and future. Clearly, after 30 long years, Newark in 1997 was finally recovering in earnest from its long period of decline and stagnation. So in that spirit, this Task Force determined to focus its attention forward on the future in the hope that this perspective might aid and encourage Newark's long-awaited march toward renewal.

The 22 civic leaders comprising the membership of the Task Force were drawn from throughout the Newark metropolitan region. The group's mission was and is to articulate a vision for the city in the century just beginning, using Newark's recent past and current condition as a backdrop. With funds provided by several New Jersey foundations, the group began its work in the expectation that it would be completed within a year. Before that year had passed, however, it became clear that at least two years would be required to collect and evaluate sufficient material to make informed judgments about the future.

The first task was to develop a process for identifying and selecting the issues that would comprise the heart of the Task Force's work agenda. The Task Force leaders, John Gibbons, Robert Curvin, and Al Koeppe, decided that, in view of the constraints on time and resources, the agenda should be focused narrowly to avoid the temptation to address the wide range of issues legitimately considered important to Newark's future. Task Force members engaged in a structured discussion to select issues that met two criteria: first, each issue had to be critical to Newark's future; and second, it had to be an issue that the Task Force, through its attention, might affect positively.

Using these screens, four issues emerged;

- Newark's image, particularly among nonresidents;
- Newark's role in and contribution to the broader regional economy;
- Newark's diverse assets and the importance of identifying and cataloguing them; and
- Newark's public schools.



These four areas of focus were considered highly important at the time, and some were not being directly addressed by any of the various other organizations and groups already involved in contributing to the city's rebirth. (Of course, the many issues associated with the longstanding school finance litigation [Abbott v. Burke], including a concern about school facilities, were on the agenda of several groups.)

We quickly discovered that any discussion of the four issues we had identified led us to consider the complex mix of crosscutting factors that affect the social, economic, and political life of Newark. None of the city's problems can be addressed in isolation from the others. While we highlight the four issues, we also attempt to place the city's problems in their historical and present context.

Our report is by no means the last word, but ultimately an effort to set forth general guidelines for implementing solutions. It is a starting point, which the Task Force hopes will prove useful as others move forward to address the extraordinarily complicated specific issues facing the City of Newark.

We believe that the issues addressed in this report warrant serious deliberation and attention if the city's renaissance is to be sustained and made to reach and include the broad racial, social, and economic diversity that is Newark.

The report is organized with our recommendations presented first, as we believe these represent some of the measures that will have a high-yield, positive impact on the city's future. They are followed by the narrative that attempts to portray the underlying findings and capture the analysis and ideas that inform our recommendations.

In December 1998, the Task Force issued an interim progress report. At that time, we stated:

"Newark's prospects have begun to brighten. Over the past several years, a few important improvements have occurred both in the downtown central business district and in some of the city's neighborhoods. The recent opening of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in the downtown signals the city's transformation, but Newark is yet to be renewed."

We submit that the issues treated in this report must be addressed if Newark is to transform the various signs of progress into a permanent, broad-based, and irreversible renewal.

Newark's Image

For much of this nation's history, Americans have had an unfavorable opinion of its urban centers. The prevailing view has been that American cities are too densely populated and rife with conflict, too crime ridden, and often under the control of governments too steeped in petty politics, patronage, and graft. The growth of mass electronic media has not helped. Nightly television news feeds viewers images that reinforce the most negative impressions of urban life.

For most cities, unfortunately, and particularly for Newark, an underlying reality has lent truth to some of these criticisms. Long before the civil unrest of 1967, Newark had already lost the glamour of the quality shopping, dining, and entertainment amenities that represent the allure of successful urban centers. They had shut down or moved elsewhere. Few parts of Newark offered stable or safe neighborhoods. As for government corruption, in 1970, Newark's incumbent mayor, Hugh J. Addonizio, campaigned for reelection at the same time he was standing trial for extortion. Sadly, in the years since, a number of municipal officials have abused the public trust, been indicted, convicted, and sent to prison.

Moreover, as this report indicates, it is not only suburbanites and out-of-towners who have a dim view of the city, but also a sizable share of Newark's own populace. Indeed, an Eagleton Poll, conducted in 1997, found that 56% of residents interviewed said they wanted to live elsewhere.

While the negative perceptions are grounded in a certain reality, the question arises whether they capture the complete picture of life and community in Newark. Surely they do not. This perception gap was evident when the Task Force sponsored a city tour for its members. Several individuals remarked that they had not been aware of the wide range of commercial and industrial activity that still goes on. Others were surprised to see the extensive homebuilding in the interior of the city. And the successes and creativity of the city's not-for-profit organizations—among them some of the most effective in the nation—are also not well recognized.

There is no escaping the fact that Newark's problems are real and rank fairly high among America's inventory of urban blight. Still, it is the view of the Task Force that Newark ought to be doing much more to counter the exaggerated negative stereotypes by emphasizing its underappreciated assets. Efforts should be launched on several fronts to combat distortion and false impressions, as well as to alter some of the realities that contribute to those negative impressions.

Recommendation 1

Develop and implement an image campaign with adequate resources to be effective.

Newark needs an extensive, adequately financed program to improve its image. Very few outsiders have any sense of the life of the city or its citizens. An image campaign should be built around communicating the history and character of the community and its people, in order to introduce a larger public to the rich and varied lives of Newark's workers, public servants, business leaders, entrepreneurs, commuters, professionals, and students from pre-K to graduate school, as well as those who teach them.

In this regard, the recent campaign sponsored by Connection Newark, the Newark Alliance, the Regional Business Partnership, and the Newark Economic Development Corporation promoting the city through advertisements in major newspapers serving the region is a very important and promising initiative. The ad series, focusing on new economic development activity and not on significant neighborhood programs and projects, provides a rare picture of positive things happening in Newark. Well-designed efforts like this one, that effectively market the city's strengths should be undertaken on a regular basis and sustained over an extended period of time. City leaders should consider conducting a similar marketing campaign targeting the millions of people who use Newark International Airport. What better way to

get the story out about Newark's promise than through the busiest airport in the nation's largest region?

Establish a forum where all the stakeholders can freely and frankly discuss Newark's future.

Newark's business, governmental, and civic leaders would be well served to create an organization to discuss key issues on an ongoing basis. Improving communication among the city's various constituencies would generate more opportunities for collaboration and potentially lessen the level of dissension that occurs between and among these sectors. In New York City, the Association for a Better New York has served this function for many years. In the 1980s, an organization called the Newark Collaboration undertook this mission but did not sustain its momentum. An evaluation of this group's experience would help strengthen the prospects for success this time. Clearly, the need for such a group, at this time, could not be greater.

Clean up neglected eyesores

Derelict sites reinforce images of neglect. The old Pabst/Hofman bottling plant is a powerful, visual reminder of the city's decline, observed by thousands of Garden State Parkway motorists and other daily passersby. Indeed, abandoned industrial

buildings visible along the rail lines serving the city should be high on the city's list of priorities for removal or renewal. The Corinthian Homes, on the other hand, located in an area that was in horrible condition only a short while ago, speaks to the future. By upgrading and maintaining heavily used corridors like South Orange, Lyons, and Springfield Avenues, a positive and progressive message would be projected instead of one of negativity and disrepair.

Recommendation 4

Empower community organizations to promote Newark through their neighborhood activities.

Enlist the city's neighborhood and community-based organizations in an effort to promote Newark. The city's residents should be given resources and opportunity through special public and private programs to upgrade their neighborhoods with signage, gardening, and new facade and clean-up efforts. A neighborhood based campaign of this kind would also provide training and jobs while advancing the city's physical renovation. The Greater Newark Conservancy has accomplished this by bringing together neighborhood residents to create community gardens.

Recommendation 5

The Directory of City Assets should be updated on a regular basis.

The Task Force's 1998 Directory of City Assets has been acknowledged as a very useful guide to the array of resources available in Newark. It has been an effective tool in promoting the city's infrastructure of cultural, educational, social, governmental, economic, and civic resources. But as with all documents of its type, the Directory is quickly becoming obsolete. The data contained in it is time sensitive. New organizations emerge, others fall by the wayside. New leaders enter the arena, veterans move on to other things. For the Directory to continue to be a useful resource, it must be kept up to date.

The Task Force believes the Directory should be updated on a regular basis—at least every three years—and distributed widely throughout the city. It should be available in the city's libraries, at government agencies, schools, and other public facilities.

Perhaps one of the local colleges or universities could assume responsibility for keeping the Directory up to date. In all

probability, foundation support will be needed to accomplish this. The Newark philanthropic community may be willing to contribute to the Directory's maintenance if this work is carried out by an organization capable of using the most

up-to-date technology to ensure the information will be accessible to both the Newark community and anyone else interested in knowing about the city's asset base.

Newark and the Regional Economy

Although Newark is no longer the economic heart of northern New Jersey, it nonetheless plays an important economic role in both the larger New York metropolitan region and New Jersey's northern tier. As Newark emerges from its long period of economic decline, it is essential that the city's leaders act swiftly and creatively to seize the opportunity presented by the economic upturn, enhanced by the vision and investments of private philanthropy, in order to enlarge and deepen Newark's contribution to the wider region of which it is a part.

Newark's public and private-sector leadership should cooperate in designing strategies to derive maximum advantage from the city's economic building blocks: transportation, entertainment, health, higher education, and commercial office activity.

There are real opportunities to bolster Newark's renaissance by building on its unique set of economic assets. The areas of economic activity that offer the most potential include transportation, entertainment, health services, higher

education, and commercial office activity. Based on recent investments in the city, there may also be emerging opportunities in the information-services industry. Joint public and private action, however, is critical to take advantage of these opportunities. Economic development planning, for example, should involve representatives from both sectors. The private sector can specify what kinds of investments are likely to be successful in different parts of the city, and the public sector can ensure that these investments relate to the economic needs, interests, and values of Newark residents. The input of Newark's diverse constituencies and communities in the planning process must



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

"The homeless will all get a home. No one will live in shelters. The homeless and mentally ill will receive medical treatment and will be able to eat out of garbage cans and live."

Newark will have an aquatic program to teach children how to swim to prevent drowning.

Newark's recreation department will develop additional recreational programs."

By ELLIOTT BRADLEY, E.S. Post-9/11 Series writer

be substantive, and this can be assured only if the city encourages private business values broad participation.

Beyond the planning function, public leadership is vital to create an environment that attracts firms engaged in the kinds of economic activity likely to thrive in Newark in the future. Thus, more attention needs to be given to the quality of city services and the responsiveness of local public servants. In addition, private leadership is vital to encourage the city to

make the case that investing in Newark is economically sound. Business leaders must become more balanced in their portrayals of city conditions and future prospects.

Additionally, the city's heavy property tax burden remains a major impediment to economic revitalization. The property tax is a problem for most New Jersey municipalities, but it is a particularly prominent barrier to private investment in the state's cities. The property tax structure ensures that there will continue to be a need to use public subsidies to attract and retain the kinds of private investment Newark wants. Newarkers accordingly should be prepared to accept this fact, but at the same time should expect that subsidies will become less necessary as the city's economic position strengthens. This issue is of special significance in light of pending implementation of long overdue property revaluation in Newark. For some residential owners, the property tax burden

will get heavier as it lightens for other residential and commercial property owners. State government, which sets tax policy statewide, should assume a larger role in helping cities deal with the fiscal burden high property taxes produce. State financial assistance could replace some of the subsidy cities must offer to induce investment by the private sector.

Recommendation 2

Key to Newark's prospects as a useful contributor to the regional economy is its ability to attract a variety of jobs that require the full range of skills and abilities.

Successful participation in the regional economy will require that Newark provides employment opportunities that ensure broad participation by local residents. The city's renaissance will be of little consequence to individuals who live in Newark if the newly created jobs require skills that few local residents possess. For Newark's participation as a regional economic actor to have meaning for Newark residents, some of the economic benefits must flow to them. High on any list of benefits must necessarily be jobs

The planning required to attract and retain firms in the five cluster areas identified in this report must address the importance of generating jobs that offer a mix of opportunities for low- and mid-range skill

levels, such as warehouse distribution, as well as the high-end knowledge jobs that drive these industry sectors. Such jobs should also offer clear avenues of skills development and advancement to more challenging positions through on-the-job training.

Recommendation

Newark residents must view their city as part of a larger metropolitan region, one in which resources are plentiful and available to advance Newark's renaissance.

The resources available in and to Newark are substantial. First, there are myriad assets within the city that provide a sound base for future economic growth and development, ranging from the local transportation infrastructure to varied cultural and educational institutions. Strategic investments in and use of these assets aimed at enhancing their economic potential should be a high priority of city leaders. Likewise, the city has substantial underutilized resources in the form of its people, many of whom have labored over many years to abate the economic decline experienced in their own neighborhoods. Often the potential inherent in local initiatives has not been fully realized because human capital development has not been a high priority of local government.

Second, beyond the city's borders is a vast pool of resources that is available to assist Newark in its renewal. These resources, unlike those closer to home, have in the past often been viewed with suspicion by Newark leaders and by many (though certainly not all) residents. This insular attitude must be rejected and replaced by a broader regional perspective. Parochialism is the last resort of the fearful; it is not a view that is in Newark's best interest. The city should embrace and utilize all the resources at its disposal.

Newark also should seek to develop partnerships with surrounding communities when doing so will help achieve goals beneficial to Newark residents. Collaborations and alliances based on common need and mutual gain should be an integral part of Newark's overall economic development strategy.

Recommendation 4

Newark should call upon the local institutions of higher education to play a much more active role in helping to position the city as a regional center

One of Newark's most valuable yet underutilized assets is the higher education infrastructure that has evolved in an area west of the downtown. The institutions that make up the Council for Higher Education in Newark (CHEN),

include the main campus of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the Newark campus of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Essex County College. In addition, both Rutgers and Seton Hall have law schools located in the nearby downtown. These institutions (with the exception of Essex County College) have for much of the past 25 years tended to maintain an arms-length relationship toward Newark and its people. The city itself has been customarily ambivalent as to whether these institutions are local assets or not. This distance and uncertainty must end.

While the capacity of these institutions to help the city chart its way through difficult economic times has never been in doubt, their willingness to do so has been unclear. But lately a significant shift in attitudes has appeared. Each of these educational centers now displays an active interest in contributing to Newark's growth and is making efforts to strengthen its links to key institutions in the city.

City and community leaders should seize the opportunity to engage Newark's higher education community in a spirited discussion of how it can best play a constructive role in promoting Newark's ongoing revitalization. City leaders, in particular, should make clear that these are valued assets that Newark wants to maximize and help to thrive. While the

institutions that comprise the city's higher education network may have to convince Newarkers of their earnestness, their willingness to apply their intellectual and institutional resources to the search for solutions to urban problems should be readily accepted. In that spirit, the recently announced Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies at the Rutgers

Newark campus is a positive development for the city. The center, which will focus on critical issues affecting the Newark metropolitan region, should become a major source of informed counsel for those in the government, civic, and business sectors of the city and its wider region.

The Newark Renaissance

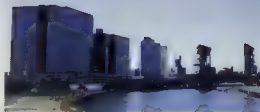
As in many American cities where an economic turnaround has occurred, Newark's revival is "downtown centric." The construction of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the rehabilitation of substantial blocks of commercial office space, the construction of a minor league baseball field, and plans for a downtown sports arena and an entertainment district are all concentrated in less than a half square mile that encompasses most of Newark's business district.

But for Newark to experience a true renaissance, all areas of the city must participate in and benefit from the new economic activity. Neighborhoods, as well as downtown, should be visibly part of the revival, and local residents need to feel they are reaping the benefits on an equitable basis as the renaissance unfolds. No issue looms as large as Newark's ability to ensure that the economic benefits engendered by new growth and investment will be broadly shared.

Recommendation 1

Occupational skills development must be given high priority by city leaders if the new jobs created in Newark are to be enjoyed by its residents.

Many Newark residents will be unable to take advantage of the jobs being created in the city and region because they lack the skills required for these jobs. This is in part a result of the poor quality of Newark's public education, but it is also related to the rapid change to knowledge-based skills that the new economy



Demands. To help those who want to be included in the pool of labor that employers draw from, the workforce from job training opportunities will have to increase in number and variety. The types of activities envisioned should include classroom and on-the-job training, as well as internships, supported work, and work/study arrangements.

The Mayor's Office of Employment and Training has long been active in securing job-training slots for city residents eligible under various state and federal programs. These efforts should be intensified. Major employers also should be encouraged to initiate training, especially for work in the rapidly developing information services industries. Employers should become familiar with and use the various federal and state financial incentives available to them when they employ urban residents attempting to overcome employment barriers.

Newark's institutions of higher education should also contribute to local skills development through course offerings keyed to the job opportunities anticipated in the region. These courses could be offered as part of continuing education programs at these institutions or as special certificate programs developed specifically to respond to the needs of a particular industry or firm. Of course, training of the type proposed here is viewed as

supplemental to education services provided by the Newark schools—public and private—that should equip students with, at minimum, the basic skills needed to function in the workplace. Our recommendations concerning education in Newark follow in the final section below.

Recommendation 2

Equitable participation in the construction employment generated by Newark's new investment must be assured to all racial and ethnic groups in the city.

Not only must there be opportunities for Newark residents to obtain jobs in the businesses arriving in the city, there also must be participation in the construction activity associated with the new investment attracted to Newark. Infrastructure renewal and expansion, commercial and retail office development, educational and cultural facilities development, and other construction activity should provide for equitable participation by Newark residents, with particular attention on the involvement of minorities. The city's affirmative action requirements for participation by city residents in publicly financed construction should be rigorously enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law and should be



applied to privately financed construction as well. City officials should include this issue in every negotiation with investors seeking to do business in the city, whether public subsidies are provided or not.

Recommendation 3

It is particularly important that entrepreneurial opportunities be available for minorities, especially African-Americans and Latinos, to share in business formation and ownership in Newark and the region.

Creating new business opportunities for minorities in Newark and the region should, to the extent the law allows, be a priority of leaders in both the public and private sectors. Equity participation in projects by minority entrepreneurs, especially from the regionally populous African American and Latino communities, should be developed. The growth and involvement of these businesses in Newark should be viewed as a necessary condition for a racially and ethnically inclusive renaissance.

Government, working in collaboration with private groups such as the Newark Alliance, can facilitate the development of such opportunities by indicating that

investments that include equity participation by minority citizens will be viewed with greater interest than those that do not. City leaders also should encourage lenders to give favorable consideration to minority entrepreneurs with sound business proposals seeking financing to acquire an ownership share in projects and businesses being developed or established in Newark.

City leaders also can play a major role in creating an environment in which minority business formation occurs. City government should actively demonstrate through its own purchasing that it supports minority businesses. It should structure its acquisition of goods and services to ensure that minority vendors can successfully compete for procurement contracts. Further, it must substantiate this commitment by recognizing that most minority businesses are small and operate with little working capital. As such, these businesses cannot grow and prosper if the bidding process, access to procedural information, and invoice procedures are overly complicated, inefficient, or unprofessional. If city officials are serious about purchasing goods and services from minority firms, they should seek to make doing business with the city a positive experience for minority entrepreneurs.

Newark's School System

The revitalization of Newark now under way will not have broad and sustained impact on the city or its social and economic life if the schools are not substantially improved. The benefits and opportunities resulting from economic growth can be shared equitably if schools produce graduates with the skills needed to compete in the 21st century. There are opportunities for combining emerging commercial development with the physical development of new education facilities. Additionally, much more needs to be done to improve school performance, as well as the fiscal and management operation of the district. Moreover, increased accountability at the state and local level is needed. This latter point is of special significance as the district begins a return to local control. It would be extremely detrimental if the same people whose past leadership failures necessitated the state takeover were to regain control of the school system.

Recommendation 1

Establish a citizens' panel to monitor school management and financial issues

There is a need for the public to be more involved in the monitoring and oversight of financial and management issues in the Newark school district. This could be accomplished by creating a citizens' panel to monitor school management and financial matters. Such a group could be modeled after the highly regarded Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, which monitors the federal budget on behalf of poor citizens. Alternatively, it could look for a model to any of several of the state-based fiscal analysis groups that work on health care and education issues across the country. In Newark, such a group would be able to monitor and report on school budget preparation and broad budgetary issues, as well as track state and city

obligations, expenditures, and contracting. An effort of this kind could be undertaken through the collaborative efforts of the existing policy and advocacy groups.

Recommendation 2

New resources for school construction coming to Newark and other Abbott districts must be creatively applied to address the facility needs of the district and the community development needs of neighborhoods.

City officials and business and civic leaders should join together in coalition to press vigorously for creative, responsible and effective implementation of the school construction and reconstruction program mandated under the Abbott decision and reflected in the Newark Facilities Plan. The school construction program is a unique

and rich opportunity to tie the revitalization of the city to the improvement of its neighborhoods, schools, and people. However, without an effective system of oversight, the program is unlikely to meet the specific needs of Newark or be carried out in a way that construction activity also provides training and job opportunities to Newark youth or business opportunities to Newark neighborhoods and enterprises.

The Abbott funding state government is making available at this point may very well be a once-in-a-lifetime infusion of significant construction financing. It is unlikely that this magnitude of investment in the physical rehabilitation and expansion of the public school facilities in Newark will again arise in the foreseeable future. Great care should be taken to maximize this opportunity.

Recommendation 3

Allowable Abbott school construction costs must reflect the realities of urban construction.

School construction costs are not the same in urban, rural, and suburban locales. Indeed, the cost of construction in Newark and other urban settings tends to be much higher than in non-urban areas of the state. The \$138/sq. ft. limit the New Jersey

Department of Education has imposed on all school construction that it funds falls considerably short of the costs Abbott districts such as Newark and Jersey City are likely to incur. Moreover, the districts also must cover land acquisition, site remediation, and construction soft costs within the state's so-called area cost allowance.

A recent report by *School Planning and Management* that addressed school construction costs in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania stated that building costs alone came close to or exceeded the \$138 allowance for all types of schools. This limitation applies uniformly to all districts receiving funds from the state. Construction costs vary by location depending on the local cost of building materials and labor, as well as local educational needs and construction limitations due to size of the site. The Coalition for Our Children's Schools, a statewide nonprofit advocacy group, argues that the small lot sizes in urban areas often require multi-story buildings, which are more expensive than the typical suburban low-rise school facilities. They contend persuasively that an inflexible per-square-foot standard is not likely to reflect the actual cost of construction. In order to implement their construction plans, Abbott districts will have to supplement what they receive from the state with local funds. This is an unfair and, in many instances,

impossible burden on these districts. While many non Abbott districts will be able to raise the money for construction funding to supplement what the state provides, Abbott districts will be hard pressed to do so.

Local governmental and civic leaders should encourage the state to reexamine its area cost allowance provision with a view to providing some flexibility in the school construction cost structure. The Newark school district's effort to secure a more realistic cost structure should receive the full support of those interested in upgrading the physical infrastructure of the city's public schools.

Recommendation 4

The state must assert leadership in responding to the state supreme court's directive to provide all children with high-quality preschool education programs, including needed facilities.

Newark, like other urban school districts, has long awaited state action implementing the Abbott decision regarding preschool programs. The state has been slow to respond and, according to a recent report by the Education Law

Center (ELC), as a result, school districts have not received any substantive guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) on the Abbott VI preschool mandate or access to supplemental state funding. The ELC also maintains that "the DOE decisions on preschool, when read in conjunction with its recently issued decisions on the districts' Five-Year Facilities Management Plans (FMP), leave the districts in a 'catch-22' regarding preschool facilities." The ELC report goes on to explain the problem: "In its preschool decisions, the DOE directed districts to seek preschool facilities in their FMPs while in the decisions on the FMPs, districts are informed that the need for preschool facilities will not be addressed by DOE until their preschool program is approved." The need for preschool facilities in Abbott districts that meet the standards set by the state supreme court is unchallenged. The state, however, has failed to address the court's directive on preschool education in general and specifically on preschool facilities funding. Children in Newark and the other Abbott districts are being denied badly needed educational services as a consequence. The state, therefore, must proceed quickly to respond to the court's directive on preschool education.

1. Education Law Center, *Abbott Implementation Report, Second Year, 2000-2001 on Preschool* (Spring 2000), p. 10.

Recommendation 5

While the obstacles to turning Newark's schools around are great, the magnitude of the challenge must not be allowed to overshadow the real progress that is being achieved.

When there is reliable and indisputable evidence to demonstrate that improvements are being made in the city's public schools, the district must actively seek to communicate that information to the larger public.

School improvement does not occur quickly or easily. And when the overall performance of the district is so far behind state norms, it is hard to celebrate even demonstrable success. Yet it is important for the morale of teachers, students, parents, and the community for the district and city leaders to publicize meaningful achievements.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

"I see a vibrant Newark filled with dozens of new office buildings, retail stores, schools, and most importantly—housing of every kind from high-rise luxury apartments and condos in downtown to town-house developments and single-family houses all across America's Renaissance City."

CHRISTIAN M. BENEDETTO JR., Director of Real Estate Services
National Redevelopment, LLC

In recent years, there have been some important areas of accomplishment that ought to be better recognized. For example, the campaign to create safe and clean schools has had measurable success. The early childhood programs are beginning to show positive results; there are more parents engaged in efforts to create better schools; and many areas of the district are engaged in whole-school reform efforts. In addition, through the support of foundations, several outstanding efforts such as the Bank Street New Beginnings Program and Project GRAD are already making a difference. Greater effort should be focused on spotlighting these and similar positive developments as they occur.



I. Newark: Past and Present

Background

The Lenape Indians were the original inhabitants of the area we today call Newark, New Jersey. The city itself is 334 years old, founded in 1666 by Puritans migrating from Connecticut. Among major U.S. cities, only Boston and New York have as long a history. By 1825, Newark had emerged as an important commercial and manufacturing center and since that time, it has been the economic and commercial hub of northern New Jersey. For many years, the state's largest banks, law firms, insurance companies, business services, and leading retailers were located in the downtown business district.

The city steadily grew in size, prosperity, and importance through the 19th and early 20th centuries, reaching a high water mark in 1950. But the decades that followed were marked by steep decline. The population, about 500,000 in mid-century, dwindled to little more than half that by 1990. Today approximately 275,000 people reside in Newark's 24 square-mile area. The city also is the core of a four-county metropolitan region (consisting of Essex, Union, Morris, and Sussex Counties) with a population of 1.9 million people. The Newark metropolitan region is itself within the larger New York City metropolitan region.

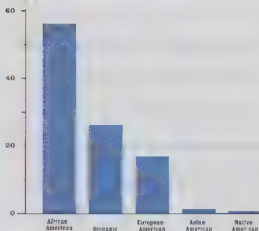


Race and Ethnicity

Newark's character and growth were also shaped dramatically by its role as an important landing point for successive waves of immigrants. Since early in the 19th century, each European immigrant group—German, Irish, Italians, Slavs, and Jews from Central and Eastern Europe—came to Newark to establish a foothold in the New World. In the mid 20th century, new groups seeking opportunity and freedom found their way to Newark: African Americans from the American South, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Portuguese. Most recently, the city has attracted newcomers from Russia, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Brazil, and Central America.

Today, Newark's resident population is predominantly African American, but Newark is also a city of considerable ethnic diversity. More than 50 nationalities are represented among its citizenry. Minorities comprise over 80% of the population. The city is approximately 56% African American, 26% Hispanic, 16.5% European American (non-Hispanic), 1% Asian American (primarily Indian, Filipino and Chinese), and the remainder mostly Native American and Asian.

NEWARK'S ETHNIC COMPOSITION



Source: Legislative Data Bank

Economic Dynamics

Like many older American cities, Newark's economic fortunes have been trending downward since the mid 20th century. By the late 1960s, private sector disinvestment and growing poverty became the dominant conditions for the next 30 years. An incipient economic recovery took hold during the second half of the 1980s, in part reflecting New Jersey's overall

economic boom during that period. However, the city's momentum stalled, and its economic momentum reversed when the national recession in 1990 took hold.

1990 Census data revealed that income for 26.3% of the population was below the federal poverty line and that 22% of a Newark household received public assistance—almost three times the national, and four times the state levels. The Census reported that the median family income of \$25,816 stood at 54% of the statewide median income (\$47,589) and 51% of the \$50,042 average for the four county Newark Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA).

Although Newark's income profile did not change appreciably during the 1990s, modest but unmistakable signs of improvement were visible. Data released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in June 2000 revealed that job growth in Newark steadily improved throughout the 1990s. Between 1992 and 1994, job growth increased by 2.5%, and by 10% between 1994 and 1997. Employment statistics showed some improvement as well. Between 1992 and 1995 there was a 2.2% increase in employment, and between 1995 and 1999, the increase was 3.6%. According to both the New Jersey Council of Economic Advisors and the state Department of Labor, although regional employment trends in the Newark region remained weak, the general direction

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

"In ten years, I think Newark will be a beautiful place. There will be town houses everywhere. With town houses and everyone living together, it will be more like a community. A community would be good because then there would be less violence."

TYDERA FAINES, 13 years old/8th Grade, Link Community School

2. The Survey with Census Maps, pages 56-57, in *Forward for Newark City*, the Department of City Planning, Newark Office, 2000, p. 26.



during the 1990s has been positive. Employment in the Newark PMSA rose to 938,500 employed in 1997, up from 906,300 four years prior. Unemployment has also shown some improvement during this period. When the decade of the 1990s began, Newark's unemployment rate stood at 10.7% and rose to 16.6% in 1992 but in 1999 had fallen to 9.9%.⁹ Even with these significant declines, however, unemployment in the city was three times as high as in nearby suburbs.

Corporate Activity

Once the address of choice for front offices representing most of the state's major corporations, Newark's downtown corporate community today is now sparse, composed of Prudential Insurance, Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG), Verizon (formerly Bell Atlantic), Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, and a number of large law firms. Of late, with the city's economic tide again rising, a small but growing number of suburban based businesses from around the Newark region are giving the city a reassessment, resulting in a new willingness to engage actively in the city's economic and cultural life. Recently the telecommunications company IDT relocated its headquarters from Bergen County to Broad Street.

During the 1990s, under the vigorous leadership and advocacy of financier philanthropist Ray Chambers, a growing circle of regional corporate participants ultimately came to play a pivotal role in the construction of the NJPAC in downtown Newark. The acknowledged success of that project has heightened corporate interest in identifying additional opportunities aimed at nurturing the city's rebirth. A prime example is Lucent Technologies, headquartered in suburban Murray Hill (Union County), which has joined in partnership with the Ford Foundation to launch Project GRAD Newark. Project GRAD provides enriched academic programs and stronger school management, as well as pledges of future college financial assistance to students who maintain certain academic performance levels.

PSEG has invested in the development of an industrial park in the city's South Ward. And an investment group led by Ray Chambers acquired the New Jersey Nets basketball team (later to need, through merger, with America's preeminent sports franchise, the New York Yankees) and, through purchase, hockey's New Jersey Devils. This group plans to relocate the Nets and Devils from the Meadowlands to Newark, housed in a new arena in the heart of downtown.

⁹ Ibid.

Culture and Entertainment

Even before the spectacular NJPAC opened in 1997, Rand McNally had ranked Newark among the nation's top ten cities for cultural attractions. A rich and diverse palette of cultural institutions is housed in Newark. The Newark Museum is nationally recognized for the quality of its collection. The museum hosts 350,000 visitors a year, including 62,000 students. The Newark Public Library maintains 1.2 million items in 11 branches, while the collection of the New Jersey Historical Society numbers 50,000 volumes. A variety of different organizations are active in Newark's art scene, emphasizing everything from education to performance, opera to jazz. The historic 2,800-seat Symphony Hall on Broad Street is a favored venue for performers and audiences. Two magnificent parks maintained by Essex County, Weequahic and Branch Brook, are outstanding examples of the late 19th century movement to create public spaces amid the growing urban bustle. In addition to this pair, some three dozen other county and municipal parks and recreational facilities serve Newark's residents and visitors. There are also 60 sites registered on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

In addition to its well-known cultural and recreational attractions, the city also has a small but vibrant community of visual artists. As reported in Newark's 1997 Overall Economic Development Program,

Newark offers some of the most affordable space in the New York/Northern New Jersey region for artists seeking to remain within commuting range of Manhattan's arts and culture scene.

Education

Newark's public school problems are well known, and over the years have been made worse by a predatory political system that often put patronage above the interests of children. Five years ago, however, the state seized administrative control of the schools, and since then two strong leaders have been appointed superintendent to manage the district. Certainly, decades of decline in a system that serves the children of a very significant number of poor families cannot be changed overnight. Nonetheless, there is evidence that improvements—albeit modest—are being made under state supervision.

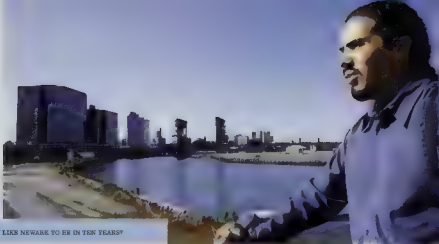
In a recent study commissioned by the Advocates for Newark Children, a local nonprofit organization of business and civic leaders, it was found that student performance on standardized tests has moved up in small increments and that student attendance has improved appreciably in elementary schools, though only slightly in high schools.

Still, given the continuing problems of the public schools, many families are opting to enroll their children in charter schools and



church-based schools. These schools today play an important role in educating Newark's children. But for the larger majority of Newark children—those who do not have the resources or support to attend a private school, public schools are the only option. These children also deserve good teachers, adequate learning materials, and a clean, safe environment in which to learn. Indeed, the New Jersey Constitution enshrines this in its guarantee that they will receive a "thorough and efficient" education.

In contrast to the city's elementary and secondary schools, higher education is one of Newark's most significant success stories. Forty-five thousand students attend six institutions of higher learning: two universities (Rutgers Newark and New Jersey Institute of Technology), three professional graduate schools (University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Rutgers Law School, and Seton Hall School of Law), and a junior college (Essex County Community College)—mostly clustered in the growing campus district.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

"In the next ten years the residents of Newark should have an improved quality of life, steady employment, fair and equal education opportunities

Newark's landscape is still constructed on an underlying fear of crime. The arts (architecture, painting, literature, film) can help create a context for healing and reconciliation."

MANUEL ACEVEDO Newark-born artist

west of downtown. Unfortunately, too few of Newark's public school graduates avail themselves of the higher education opportunities housed in their city. Similarly, too few graduates of these institutions remain in Newark after earning their degrees. Typically, the pattern is for them to take the skills acquired in the classrooms, labs, and lecture halls of Newark's university complex and transfer those skills to locales where job opportunities appear more promising

Community Development Initiatives

During the decade and a half from 1970 through the mid 1980s, virtually no market rate housing was constructed in Newark. Following the development of Society Hill, a highly successful, moderate- and middle income housing complex in Newark's Central Ward, developers began to take seriously the unmet demand for middle income housing. Owner occupied housing is only 21% of the city's available housing stock, and half of that housing was built before 1950. The city administration has made a priority of encouraging housing construction that is geared toward attracting a higher income market in the expectation that buyers with greater means will contribute more to the tax base. The past decade has also witnessed a change in the city's strategy toward its sizable stock of subsidized and

public housing. The Newark Housing Authority (NHA) during this period determined that the high rise, high density complexes that dominated housing construction in Newark in the decades following World War II are too costly and difficult to maintain, and ill-suited for building a sense of community. Consistent with a growing national trend away from large apartment block public housing, the Authority concluded that low density scattered town-house units would enhance the long-term viability of the city's public housing. This represented a major shift in basic philosophy on the part of a bureaucracy that for decades made its mark by clearing large tracts of land to construct immense compounds of forbidding brick apartment towers. Dangerous, antiquated, abandoned high rise buildings are now being demolished, replaced with single unit, one-story town houses for low and moderate-income residents.

Newark's inventory of public high rise housing units for families, prior to the NHA taking this new direction, had been approximately 6,931 units. The agency has begun to demolish all of these and has gotten the replacement process under way. To date, according to the NHA, approximately 1,465 town house replacement units have been completed and are available for occupancy. This

means, however, that there is a net of 5,466 fewer family housing units available. Legal Services of New Jersey, which has been monitoring the NHA's replacement activities, indicates that approximately 1,032 townhouse units are currently planned for construction, which would bring the total of such units to 2,497 and result in an overall fall-off of 4,434 family units.⁴ The remainder of the NHA's supply of public housing is composed of 2,863 low rise and approximately 2,746 mixed-population units. The NHA's housing construction activities, while encouraging, have not been able to keep up with the need for affordable housing in the city.

Neighborhood associations and community organizations have also taken an active role in Newark's rehabilitation. Operating through local collective efforts, citizen groups and individuals have made important contributions to improving Newark's landscape and quality of life. These so-called Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and related organizations—many of them church-based and supported—have formed the operational backbone of community renewal in Newark. Many CDCs of varying sizes and sophistication have concentrated on building housing, ranging from a few units in a single neighborhood to dozens or even hundreds of units scattered throughout the city. These organizations

4. Legal Services of New Jersey has represented the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing in litigation against the Newark Housing Authority and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the past 11 years. The case, *Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing v. Housing Authority of the City of Newark*, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, Case No. 89-1903, seeks to ensure the coalition of neighborhood groups in Newark is able to exercise its right to fair housing in Newark.

In addition to helping fill some of the vacant housing demand, also contribute to the vital nucleus of small businesses that not only generate employment and shopping opportunities for local residents but also provide a force for economic and social stability in their neighborhoods.

The commitment to Newark's revitalization on the part of community-based development organizations and the neighborhood-based small-business sector is crucial to sustaining Newark's neighborhoods as places of hope. Because of the work performed by these key actors, a number of Newark's neighborhoods are displaying a resilient vibrancy, and other areas of the city that had suffered more severely from the long years of private disinvestment and economic isolation are beginning to show signs of recovery.

Government Leadership and Political Environment

Newark has a strong mayor, weak council form of municipal government, with a nine-member city council composed of four at-large members and one member from each of the city's five wards. The

council is fully independent of the mayor but because the mayor controls the budget-making process and appoints (with council approval, nearly all executive officers' policy is overwhelmingly driven by the mayor's office.

Since 1970, an African American has occupied the mayor's office, and the city's elective offices have been dominated by African American political figures. The incumbent mayor, Sharpe James, has held the office since 1986, when he unseated four-term Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson, who himself had been mayor since 1970.

The nine-member council tends to be reflective of the changing demographics of the city and its neighborhoods. Racially, the current council makeup consists of six African Americans, one Hispanic, and two members of European heritage (a Portuguese American and an Italian-American).

Local government plays a critical role in shaping a city's renewal program. If has zoning and land use planning responsibility, it determines whether economic incentives will be used to attract business and what kinds of businesses will benefit from such incentives. Some critics of Newark's governmental/political establishment have argued that the city has been slow to initiate a renewal process because of a lack of leadership. Now, however, it is clear that Newark's mayor

has become a very effective booster of the city's resurgence. City government under Mayor James's leadership has assumed a much more active role in advancing Newark's renaissance through infrastructure investments, advocacy at the state and federal government levels, and promotion of the city's assets.

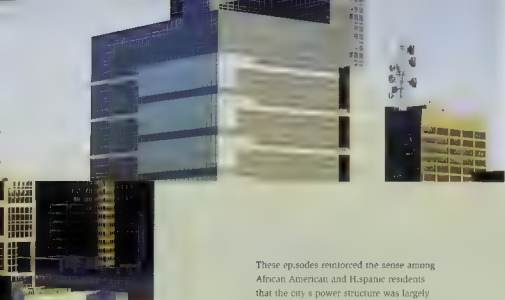
**NEWARK,
MAP OF CITY BY WARD**





II. *Shaping an Image for the 21st Century*

The year 1966 marked Newark's tercentennial—by any measure, a landmark in the city's history. Yet in the event, it proved a landmark that passed almost unnoticed, because it occurred at a point when prospects for Newark were anything but celebratory. Indeed, growing numbers of New Jerseyans were coming to believe that the state's most prominent urban center for three centuries now merited little attention and no acclaim. A quiet but continuous exodus of the city's middle class to the suburbs had marked the years leading up to Newark's 300th anniversary. As they left, the city's property values and its tax base eroded. The very resources Newark would require to meet the needs of an expanding disadvantaged populace were steadily declining as a result of this out-migration. At the same time, a growing minority population was arising to insist on better public services and political access—this from a municipal leadership that was broadly regarded as corrupt.



In 1966 and 1967, a number of incidents, superimposed upon a racially divided and socially deprived city, resulted in an explosive mix. Police-community relations were enflamed by the killing of a black youth, Lester Long. In an attempt to bring the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry to Newark, the mayor had offered a huge tract of land located in the Central Ward, giving rise to fears of black removal. The school system was embroiled in a racially tinged, City Hall-inspired controversy involving a well-qualified African-American professional who was passed over for a senior administrative office in the system in favor of a politically connected white candidate.

These episodes reinforced the sense among African American and Hispanic residents that the city's power structure was largely indifferent to their concerns. By the summer of 1967, as the news accounts and television images of Newark's civil unrest burst upon the nation's consciousness, the city assumed an identity that—for those of a certain age—it retains even to this day. But for many others who were already familiar with the city's fabric, the wounds inflicted by those disturbances represented only the most traumatic of a long series of blows that exacerbated Newark's descending spiral toward economic, social, and cultural marginalization. The social and economic trends already evident—population decline, widening poverty, atrophying social institutions and disappearing cultural amenities, and the ongoing deterioration of public education—accelerated along their downward trajectory in the ashes of 1967.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

I would like to see Newark as an economically vibrant city with a strong educational system and an increase in its taxable housing base

LOUIS PREZEAU President & CEO, City National Bank

One development stood out during that period as a rare beacon of promise. The city's political landscape underwent a rapid transformative shift, as non-white political candidates, first and foremost predominantly African Americans, and later Hispanics, achieved success at the polls. In 1970, following a tumultuous campaign, Newark voters chose as mayor an African-American engineer named Kenneth A. Gibson—who immediately received wide prominence as the first

"black mayor of a major northeastern city," as journalists often referred to him. With the national spotlight once more on the city—but now in a more positive frame—Gibson's election was heralded as a sign of the growing maturation of minority participation in American politics. Locally, the election of an African-American mayor kindled an upbeat sense of expectation—even optimism—among the city's disadvantaged communities. Those who had felt the keenest sense of alienation

and disenfranchisement embraced a new sense that this aged industrial city might begin to reshape and revitalize itself.

The new mayor would proclaim that "wherever American cities are going, Newark will get there first." In time, this prophecy turned out to be cruelly ironic. Hope yielded to disappointment and resignation as Newark's leadership failed to translate increased state and federal financial assistance, heightened investment by local and national foundations, and the support of people of good will into economic renewal. To its credit, Mayor Gibson's administration paid considerable attention to the social needs of local residents and invested much of the city's newfound resources in a variety of social services. Many of these programs were undeniably effective in assisting those they were intended to aid. But many others failed—for a host of reasons, including (but not limited to) corruption, political interference, inadequate administration, excessive expectations, and a failure to provide requisite collateral support or follow-up. Moreover, despite the magnitude of the spending and the array of services it supported, the available resources simply could not keep pace with the escalating needs of a population that was increasingly poor. Newark gradually became a symbol of the economic decline afflicting urban America.

As the passage of time turned that momentous period into memory, it was the civil unrest of 1967, rather than the trailblazing political accomplishments of 1970, that came to symbolize Newark's

primary image. The turmoil captured by television and broadcast worldwide became fixed as the city's portrait—a portrait that eventually took on a life all its own. Long have Newarkers complained how virtually every out-of-town newspaper story about the city never fails to make prominent reference to the events of 1967. Three decades later, the unrest still is often mentioned in press accounts about almost any aspect of life in Newark.

This external image of Newark as a riot-torn ghetto might be dismissed as just an irritant, were it not that this image is a major barrier to economic progress and civic growth. So strong has been the city's association with this historic episode three decades past that private investors have been interested even in investigating whether or not the image bore any relationship to the current reality.

But Newark's "image problem" cannot simply be dismissed as a case of bad public relations or misinformed perceptions held by outsiders. Those who know best—the city's residents—also view Newark unfavorably. A 1997 survey conducted by Eagleton Institute's Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University revealed that two in three Newark residents gave the city negative ratings as a place to live. In comparison, a similar survey in two other New Jersey cities revealed that half of New Brunswick's residents and three-quarters of those in Hackensack gave their cities favorable ratings. Eighteen percent of Newark residents described the city as a "dump" or "slum," 16% listed crime as

one of the city's defining characteristics, another 15% said the city is unsafe or scary, and 16% described it as "terrible" or "horrible."

In the view of this Task Force, there is reason to believe that at long last this negative tide is turning. There are positive indicators that the city's image has begun to gradually improve—at least among non-residents.⁵ At the same time, for this change in perception to take root and grow—first in New Jersey and the New York metropolitan region and later, across the nation and internationally—a focused effort is called for to capitalize on the positive developments that are contributing to the change of attitude about Newark and its prospects. The city's many cultural and educational assets, its central location along the Northeast corridor and role as a global transportation hub, its racial and ethnic diversity, and its place in American history can and should be enthusiastically promoted in a substantial program of image building for Newark.

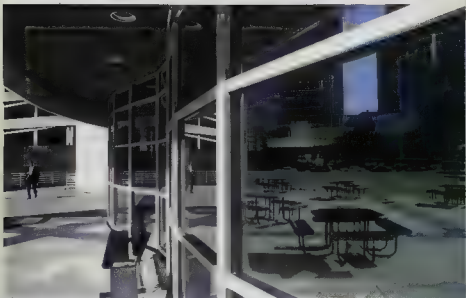
The Task Force feels strongly that the city's many assets need to be more aggressively promoted, within Newark and beyond. In an effort to draw attention to the size and quality of the city's resource base, a Directory of City Assets cataloguing the array of Newark's institutions, organizations, programs, and projects,

was developed, published, and distributed by the Task Force. Since its introduction, this document has been used quite effectively by public and private agencies as a marketing tool, to promote the city's many attributes. If maintained, it could continue to be an important tool in building a more positive image of Newark and what it has to offer.

The Task Force believes there is much to do, and much that can be done, for Newark to make its case persuasively to America and the wider world. Equally important, there is much that must be done to demonstrate to local residents, the very people who endured the long period of isolation and abandonment, that the Newark renaissance being trumpeted is more than rhetoric.

However, such efforts are unlikely to succeed unless the city's political and civic leadership achieves tangible progress toward addressing the long-standing complaints of many Newarkers about the quality of public services, the responsiveness of local elected leadership, and the commitment of the business community to broad-based economic opportunity. These are leadership issues of the highest order, and it is leadership that is most critical to both Newark's image and its reality. The subject is a sensitive one, because it speaks to the record of chronic

⁵ A 1998 Eagleton Poll surveyed New Jersey residents about their image of Newark one year after the opening of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.



failure that is also an undeniable part of the city's reality. But it is a subject too important to ignore or gloss over. Recent efforts like the United Way's Leadership Program and the Partnership for New Jersey-initiated Newark Leadership Program aim to strengthen the quality of the city's civic leadership. These programs identify and provide education and support to individuals who exhibit high potential to become leaders in all sectors of the city's civic life. These are promising additions to Newark's asset base.

Image is by its nature a mysterious blend of perception and reality. At present, an unusual set of circumstances that includes exceptionally strong national and regional

economic conditions, consistent and meaningful private sector and philanthropic commitment, and sustained and focused community-based development, combine to provide a rare opportunity to reshape how others perceive the city and to define its reality in more positive and constructive terms. There is understandable excitement about the opportunities, tempered by a sense of urgency, knowing the moment may not last. Newarkers and their regional supporters must act with swift determination to capture and maximize the opportunity the city confronts in order not to recapitulate the legacy of disappointment that Newark has known in too frequent years.

IMAGE OF NEWARK

Source: Eagleton Poll, 1997

CITY SERVICES

Excellent/Good Ratings

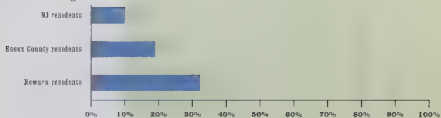


IMAGE OF NEWARK, NEWARK RESIDENTS

Source: Eagleton Poll, 1997

CITY SERVICES

Highest Rating

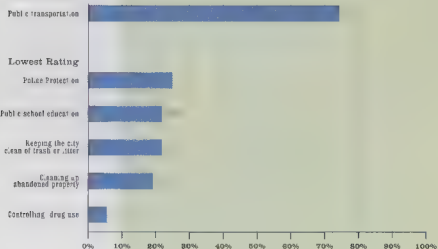
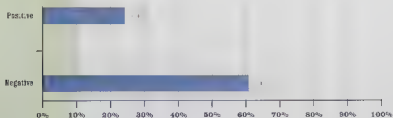


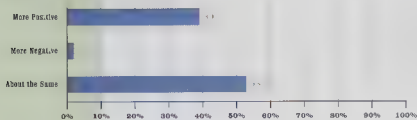
IMAGE OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS

Source: Eagleton Poll, 1998

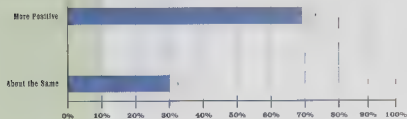
Overall Opinion



Impact of NJPAC—Change in Image



Among Those Who Have Been to NJPAC



III. Newark and the Regional Economy

Throughout its history, Newark has played a prominent, if not always dominant, role in New Jersey's economy—especially so in the state's heavily populated northern tier. The city's historic significance as a manufacturing center began falling into eclipse during the years of the Great Depression and particularly following World War II, as factories began to migrate from the nation's industrial Northeast to the states of the South and Southwest. A similar pattern had already become discernible internally within the state, as Newark's share of total New Jersey employment fell from one in five to just over one in ten over a three-decade span.⁶ Newark did manage to retain its traditional leadership in finance, insurance, and law for many years thereafter. But even with those professional service industries, Newark's prominence eroded from mid-century onward—gradually at first, precipitously as the years passed. By the middle of the 1970s, Newark's economic landscape was badly tattered. Scant private capital was being invested in Newark, and when it came it usually required substantial public subsidies, particularly major property tax abatements, that often diluted the positive impact of these deals on an already badly eroded tax base.

Yet even as its economic fortunes suffered, Newark continued to fill an important function economically in the wider region—both in New Jersey's northern tier and in the larger New York metropolis. Regardless, many people, both within and outside the city limits, have long perceived Newark to be its own self-contained political, social, and

6. Marilyn Rubin and Amir Webb, Newark 1997 Overall Economic Development Program, City of Newark, Newark, N.J., March 1998.

economic entity, largely untouched and uninterested in developments beyond its borders. In focusing on Newark's regional role as one of the priorities of this Task Force, our members are keenly aware of this parochial view of the city held by so many. We believe it is a perspective that

has ultimately discouraged collaboration and cooperation between Newark and its neighbors on a variety of issues of mutual interest. It has also stunted the city's willingness to draw upon the rich supply of human talent living and working in the region to address economic and other issues confronting the city.

To help the Task Force better understand the city's regional economic significance, the late Dr. Henry J. Raimondo, the prominent regional economist at Rutgers

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

'Newark ten years hence will once again be one of America's great cities, having capitalized upon the major advances achieved in the amazing decade just completed. Building on the significant success of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, The Newark Museum, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in attracting visitors, stimulating economic development, and creating an optimistic atmosphere, Newark in 2010 will demonstrate how good planning, solid partnerships, and a passion for a better, more humanistic city can change dramatically the way an urban community perceives itself and is perceived by others.'

LAWRENCE F. GOLDMAN, President and CEO
New Jersey Performing Arts Center



was asked to identify the barriers that limit Newark's ability to contribute to and benefit from its position within one of America's most economically vibrant and important metropolitan regions.

In a status report issued in late 1998, the Task Force presented Dr. Ramondo's findings. His report, entitled "The Newark Economy: Profile, Performance, and Potential," highlighted the city's continuing economic significance in both the state and the region. The paper proffered answers to three questions posed by the Task Force:

1. What has happened to the Newark economy?
2. How is the Newark economy performing?
3. Will Newark residents share in the city's economic revival?

The answers offered in the report were at once encouraging and troubling.

Ramondo identified two distinct economic regions of which Newark is a component. The smaller of the two, the Newark metropolitan region, he described as comprising four northern New Jersey counties: Essex, Morris, Sussex, and Union. The second region was identified as encompassing the seventeen-county bistate area of jurisdiction of the Port





Authority of New York and New Jersey, including New York City, Long Island, Rockland and Westchester counties in New York, and the eight counties of northeastern New Jersey (Essex, Passaic, Bergen, Hudson Union, Morris, Middlesex, and Somerset)

Dr. Raimondo determined that "with its comparative strength in [the transportation, communications, and public utilities sectors] and services [including education and health care], and its recent investment and well-known places of entertainment [including NJPAC and various eating and drinking establishments], the Newark City and Metropolitan Area clearly support the state and regional economies."⁷ He noted that Newark and the Newark metropolitan economies are less significant today than in the past, but are still "valuable components of the state and regional economies."⁸ Dr. Raimondo's paper warned, however, that if recent growth is to be sustained and accelerated, the city and metro economies "must focus on their most productive economic activities."⁹ The report identifies those activities as five industry clusters

- A Transportation Hub that includes the Newark International Airport, the Port Newark Elizabeth marine terminals, and the downtown transportation complex of bus and rail facilities, such as NJ Transit's Penn Station and Broad Street Station, PATH, the City Subways, and Amtrak,
- A Health Complex that includes the network of hospitals and laboratories in the greater Newark area,
- An Education Network that includes institutions of higher education, including UMDNJ, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers Newark, Essex County College, Rutgers Law School, and Seton Hall School of Law
- A Corporate Office Center that includes available commercial buildings within the central business district

⁷ Henry J. Raimondo, *The Newark Economy: Profile, Performance, and Potential*, Progress Report, Newark in the 21st Century Task Force, December 1998, p. 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹ *Ibid.*

In his report, Dr. Ramondo argued that the continuing growth and development of these clusters is critical to Newark's future prospects. He also stated that the city and metro economies need to develop in such a way that

transportation, and finance. The Task Force believes the industry clusters identified in Dr. Ramondo's report represent real opportunities for development on which the city's leadership should focus attention. But

"...they retain much of the economic benefits which their people and businesses produce. Newark should strive to become more than a 'platform' where business gets done. It should become a place that creates wealth, reinvests in itself, expands the five industry clusters, and repeats the cycle again and again."¹⁰

The city's economic significance has waned over the years, but this past decade of quaking resurgence has meant that Newark is once more adding value to the region in key areas—particularly services,

maximizing these opportunities, the Task Force believes, cannot be done without the support of educational institutions, organizations, and the business community. Newark's borders. Many of the resources needed to build Newark's future will have to come from other communities...

the region serving and being served by Newark. Simply put, it will demand nothing less than the full interaction of an interdependent regional economy.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 45

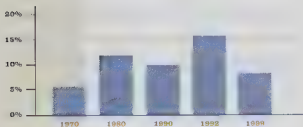
NEWARK'S EMPLOYED, 1992-1995-1999

Source: *State of the Cities 2000*, U.S. Dept of HUD, June 2000



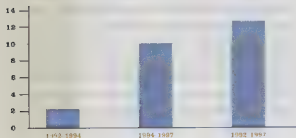
NEWARK'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 1970-1999

Source: *State of the Cities 2000*, U.S. Dept of HUD, June 2000



NEWARK'S PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN JOBS

Source: *State of the Cities 2000*, U.S. Dept of HUD, June 2000



IV. The Newark Renaissance

"Newark's on a Roll," proclaim the fluttering banners installed along the city's downtown thoroughfares. Their message reflects a sentiment that has been taking hold among Newark residents and Newark observers alike. After 30 years of only the sparsest levels of private investment, this city now stands poised for its long-awaited turnaround—perhaps. Much of the optimism is fueled by the belief that the early success of NJPAC will be a catalyst for the revitalization of downtown Newark. Early evidence suggests that the \$187 million of public and private funds invested in the performing arts center has indeed stimulated additional private investment downtown.²² However, the optimistic mood is tempered by the memory of past recoveries, the most recent of which occurred in the 1980s, that ultimately stalled as opportunities were squandered or the broader economic climate turned unfavorable.

Early in its deliberations, the Task Force sought to gain as complete a picture as possible of the economic development activity occurring in Newark. At one of its initial meetings, the group invited city officials and representatives from the business and community development sectors to describe projects then under way or in advanced planning. Task Force members wanted to know, if private business interest in Newark had grown following the opening of the NJPAC and, if so, what was being done to build upon it. The group also sought to learn what was being done to ensure that the city's economic good fortune would benefit the public citywide. This Task Force has strongly emphasized the need for focused attention on the challenge of equitably distributing the economic benefits stemming from Newark's resurgence.

²² New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Office of Public Affairs.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

In ten years I'd like to see a Newark that exudes arts, economic vitality particularly within the neighborhoods, academic excellence, well-regarded sports and recreation, world class technology, outstanding health statistics, model public safety mechanisms, well-designed housing, spiritual rejuvenation, innovative political leadership, increased neighborhood-based planning, and an Overall Master Plan that serves as a collective vision statement and guideline for future development. pretty much a quality of life unparalleled in any other urban center."

SANDONNA BRYANT Coordinator
Newark Community Development Network

Optimism

From these meetings, the Task Force learned of several major new private investments being made in office buildings downtown. Until recently, Newark's 11 million square feet of downtown office space was of marginal interest to private investors. No longer. In 1997, the Townsend Group of Maryland purchased Two Gateway Center, one of

the town's 11 modern, five-story office complex connected to the Penn State Park Station. A year later, it profitably resold the building to the Witkoff Group of New York. The Prudential also sold three more of its Gateway towers (Gateway One, Three and Four) to a joint venture of Tishman Speyer of New York and Gale & Wentworth of Florham Park, in suburban Morris County. Older, prewar office buildings that had languished on the market for years while suffering the effects of deferred maintenance have also



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

"In Newark's future I see a city with vibrant and thriving neighborhoods and neighborhood cultural, social, and athletic outlets. There will be growing middle- and upper middle income communities with ethnically diverse residents who work in intellectually stimulating and challenging city-based jobs. Property values will skyrocket but not to the levels of New York City. I also see WBGO as the country's foremost presenter of satellite, internet and broadcast-delivered jazz programming throughout the world. Newark, WBGO's home, will be the business, cultural and religious center of the state.

CHEPAS BOWLES, General Manager
Newark Public Radio WBGO

begun to attract new ownership and modernization capital. Buildings that once defined Newark's profile, such as 24 Commerce Street, 550 Broad Street, 33 Washington Street, and 744 Broad Street (the city's tallest tower) have all been

involved in transactions and are slated for significant reinvestment and upgrading. Real estate activity of this kind had been absent from Newark for almost 40 years. The Newark Economic Development Corporation (NEDC), the city's public/private economic development agency, informed the Task Force that several major developers were in competition to build a new 250,000-square-foot office building downtown for the federal General Services Administration to house the state offices of the FBI among other agencies.

More recently, the city has attracted one of the fast-growing long-distance telecommunications providers, IDT, to relocate from the suburbs. The firm is moving from Bergen County into the landmark International Style tower that formerly housed the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company. IDT will occupy the

entire building, and has said it plans to expand in Newark as the company grows. These breakthrough developments have not been limited solely to the office market. At its meeting addressing the downtown development trends, the Task Force learned of plans to construct a minor league ballpark at the north end of Broad Street. The project came to fruition in July 1999, when the Newark Bears of the independent Atlantic League inaugurated the new 6,014-seat Riverfront Park before an enthusiastic, sell-out crowd. The Task Force also was informed about the possibility of a new downtown sports arena to be the home of the NBA's Nets (and now, also, the NHL's Devils). Prospects for this project improved substantially in late 1998 when the Nets were purchased by an investment group led by Raymond Chambers, the financier, philanthropist and Newark advocate, and matters advanced still further when the Nets ownership merged with baseball's New York Yankees. The recent purchase of the Devils by this growing sports conglomerate has added additional momentum to the sense that the city's prospects are improving.

NEDC also reported that Prudential and the American Foundation of Morristown have loaned more than \$8 million to the New Newark Foundation to acquire eight acres strategically located between Newark's university district and the

Performing Arts Center/Riverfront district. This area is targeted for transformation into a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week urban village, featuring new and restored housing, shopping, dining, entertainment, art galleries, and small, professional office space.

This incipient rebirth of Newark's downtown is cause for excitement and hope, especially in view of the long years of decline and disinvestment. Yet, a downtown renaissance by itself is clearly insufficient to produce a renewal of the entire city as an economically healthy and socially vibrant community. Cleveland Ohio's mayor Michael White, addressed these concerns—shared by many Task Force members—during a recent visit to Newark. Mayor White raised the question whether Newark's resurgence will remain contained and isolated within the downtown business district and immediate surroundings or grow more broadly inclusive to encompass the city's varied neighborhoods. Mayor White, whose own city has undergone a strong comeback anchored, in part, by new sports and cultural facilities, told local officials that downtown projects like the proposed arena should be part of "a comprehensive economic development plan for the downtown and be balanced to extend benefits outside downtown and into blighted neighborhood areas."

In the view of this Task Force, this issue must be paramount in the minds of all those involved in creating a new Newark. Failure on the part of the city's public and private decision makers to ensure that the people who live throughout the city are able to participate broadly in its economic rebirth would be politically unwise and morally wrong. And it almost certainly would be self-defeating—resulting in any recovery ultimately being unsustainable over the long term.

Neighborhood Development

Newark residents have long been active in the efforts to revitalize the city's neighborhoods. During its deliberations, the Task Force took note of the role that residents have played in improving Newark's physical landscape and its quality of life. Often these efforts have been driven by local religious organizations such as church-sponsored community development corporations (CDCs) and similar neighborhood-based groups that have been at the forefront of neighborhood stabilization efforts and serve as the backbone of community renewal activities. Some CDCs also have

contributed to the stock of small, private businesses that provide both local employment and shopping opportunities for residents.

The CDCs have made important contributions to help stem the tide of economic decline and stimulate Newark's economy. Organizations such as New Community Corporation, La Casa de Don Pedro, the North Ward Center, Connettan Housing Development, St. James Community Corporation, Tri City People's Corporation, Unified Vailsburg Services, and others have shown extraordinary commitment to Newark's revitalization and have been essential to keeping the city's neighborhoods as places where hope can flourish. Because of their hard work, Newark's neighborhoods today are slowly recovering from the private disinvestment and economic isolation they have experienced for three decades. These organizations are rich in human capital but are always financially strapped; hence they are limited in what they are able to do. The development or linkages between these creative entities and the downtown commercial real estate interests might well benefit both.

Neighborhood organizations also have joined forces with public school parents to press the city to set aside land for new

schools and open space. They have urged the city to plan for entire communities with amenities, not just new housing where there happens to be available space.

Local government, the Task Force realizes, also has been important to community revitalization efforts, as it has been to downtown redevelopment. Federal and state community development funds allocated to the city government have been used to support the range of CDC activities. City government has used some of these funds in its own efforts to build new housing, rehabilitate existing housing, finance business development, and attract other investment. The Newark Housing Authority also has made significant strides in recent years toward the transformation of the city's public housing. The agency has moved away from reliance upon high rise, high density buildings in favor of lower-density, scattered town-house and garden apartment style units. The change has been well received by public housing tenants and by other residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Upgrading the Capacity of Local Residents

In a recent report prepared for the Lucent Technologies Foundation by the Hedrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University's Burssten School of Planning and Public Policy, the following data were included to underscore the economic challenges that confront many of Newark's citizens:

1. The city's unemployment rate exceeds twice the state level,
2. One in four Newark residents earns less than a poverty level income,
3. Newark residents tend to be employed at the lowest wage levels. Based on the studies of one Newark employer with a sizable workforce of Newark residents, those living in the city earned \$6,250 less than its workers from suburban Essex County, and \$11,441 less than the average pay overall,
4. More than 40% of Newark's low-income renters are classified as "worst case" housing needs—that is, paying more than half their income in rent.¹³

13. Needs and Opportunities for Philanthropy in Newark. Building a New Century Alliance. John J. Hedrich Center for Workforce Development. Burssten School of Planning and Public Policy. Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey. April, 1999. p. 10.

The report states further that the economic and social challenges faced by many city residents contributed to and are exacerbated by the poor performance of Newark's schools.⁴⁴ A second set of facts highlights the extent to which the schools are a problem:

1. Half the population over 25 years old has less than 12 years of formal education, and a quarter has less than nine years of education.
2. The city's school children are among the poorest performers on statewide achievement tests.
3. The percentage of at-risk⁴⁵ children attending Newark's schools (15.2%) is well above state, national, and peer group averages.

Attracting private investment to downtown and neighborhood revitalization is critical to achieving the renewal Newark

is working toward. Equally important, however, is identifying and supporting those additional activities that offer the best possibilities for economic growth and employment opportunity. In this regard there are serious issues raised by the conditions described in the preceding lists. If, as studies indicate and the Task Force believes, economic growth prospects are best for Newark in the areas of higher education, health services, finance,



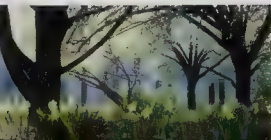
⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 24. "At-risk" is defined as children under 9 years of age, who are not high school graduates living with a mother who is not a high school graduate, or who are living in a household with a 1980 poverty level.

transportation, and entertainment, many city residents may not have the skills needed to take advantage of the employment opportunities in these sectors. These are fields that demand increasingly sophisticated technical, reasoning, and communication capabilities. For many Newark residents lacking the requisite skills, there is a growing risk of falling further behind in the future.

These data and recent trends clearly point to the conclusion that including many Newark residents in the city's economic revival now under way will require improved training and education to enhance workforce quality. Upgrading and expanding education and training programs for city residents is the only avenue to real participation for these citizens in Newark's future economy. As stated in the Holifield Center report:

"Improved training and education increases the quality of workers and allows society to make better use of capital and technology. It gives residents of Newark a pathway to their own city's economic growth. Improving education in Newark will become a powerful indicator of the quality of the available workforce, a major factor in decisions by firms to locate or expand operations in the area, and for corporate and government decision makers to continue to support a better Newark for the 21st century."



6. Holifield

V. Introduction: The Urban School

Public schooling in Newark has been the focus of serious concern for many years. Like other urban school systems in America, Newark's schools have failed to meet the educational needs of a student population that has dramatically changed during the 20th century.

In *Ghetto Schooling*,¹⁷ an insightful study of public education in Newark, author Jean Anyon relates that in 1871, when New Jersey became the last state then in the union to guarantee free public education,¹⁸ Newark had one of New Jersey's most successful school systems. Other New Jersey communities regarded its schools as a model. Newark High School, whose quality was reputed to rival that of the private academies, attracted the city's professional and wealthy families to enroll their children there.

By 1900, more than half of the city's workforce was foreign-born. These residents were predominantly Irish and German immigrants who had arrived during the 1880s and were later joined by Italian, Slavic, Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Austrian, and Greek arrivals. By 1908, according to Anyon, Newark's public schools had a population of 44,605 students. The system responded to the influx of immigrants with a series of innovative programs designed to attract and keep children in the classroom. The district also invested in school construction to an extent that has not since been equaled. Anyon cites an article in a 1914 issue of *Architectural Record* praising the city's construction of 44 new school buildings between 1880 and 1914.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jean Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform* (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1997), p. 42.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

As the 21st century begins, Newark's public schools are struggling. Fifteen years of declining student performance, disinvestment in facilities, and generally weak, uninspired leadership. Similar to a century ago, Newark's adult population today is composed largely of people who migrated to the city from elsewhere. Unlike that earlier period, these new arrivals come primarily from the American South, from the Caribbean and Latin America, and from places around the globe other than Europe. The school district, still with an enrollment of some 44,600 students, is now composed 63% African American,

"As I gaze from my window at Washington and New Streets I dream of seeing a vibrant establishment, restaurants and housing, as well as many people walking on the streets day and night. I think of strolling along Broad Street to meet friends. I look forward to seeing every young child, as well as many people performing at the Newark Museum, Agnes A. Center for Contemporary Art and City Without Walls Gallery."

PATRICIA KETTENBRING Director
Rutgers Business and the Arts



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE NEWARK TO BE IN TEN YEARS?

26% Hispanic (of all races), 8% non-Hispanic white and 3% Asian and other.

No longer the trailblazing schools envied by neighboring communities, the district has for many years been widely regarded as a public education failure. For this reason—and for the system's stubborn inability to respond positively to a host of state and local initiatives and programs—the school district is now facing a new challenge.

"In ten years, I envision the dawning of a new educational era in Newark Public Schools—one in which there will be a partnership between the city's public schools and Newark's institutions of higher education (Rutgers, NJIT, Seton Hall, UMDNJ and Essex County College). This partnership will stimulate the development of new and creative approaches to teaching and learning, and will usher in an educational renaissance throughout the city. Newark is now moving in the right direction educationally for all its students."

FERNALD WILLIAMS, Principal, West Side High School



largest state takeover of a local public school system in New Jersey's history. State intervention and the appointment of two highly respected school superintendents have convinced corporate and nonprofit philanthropy to support the recent school reform efforts. The Victoria and Pruden, a Foundation, for example, and later eight other foundations, including Lucent Technologies and Ford Foundations, have made significant financial commitments to educational improvement.

In a presentation to the Task Force, Beverly Hall, Newark's first state-appointed superintendent of schools, linked her mission to the city's broader efforts to renew itself. In reconstructing the Newark

schools, we are changing the ways in which students learn and teachers teach but our efforts and their results are not restricted to the classroom." In Newark, Dr. Hall said, "we are building an institution whose students can both contribute to and benefit from a city that also is in the process of remaking itself."

During the course of her four-year tenure, Dr. Hall was able to produce modest improvement in student scores on standardized tests, although it is broadly recognized that measurable progress in this area, in spite of the urgency, will necessarily take time. Under her leadership, however, the district did undergo significant change: 34 ineffective school principals were replaced, full-day kindergarten was implemented, in-service training for teachers was initiated, and guidance services were extended to every elementary school. Dr. Hall opened Technology High School, a new state-of-the-art technical and vocational school. The Task Force views these developments as noteworthy accomplishments for which Dr. Hall and her team deserve credit. The educational transformation that all want to see has yet to happen, but movement in the right direction has been made.



Responsibility for sustaining that momentum has now fallen to Dr. Hall's successor, Marion Bolden. Ms. Bolden has launched her tenure in office by focusing on revitalizing the high schools and establishing credible fiscal management systems.

Beyond the challenges noted above, Superintendent Bolden must also contend with another constraining reality: the provisions of existing collective bargaining agreements and the imbalance in the bargaining process stand in the way of effective education reform. Over the years, contract provisions have been negotiated that tie the hands of principals and other administrators. When the board of education was elected, union members often secured membership on the board, further weakening or eliminating the ability of the board to negotiate effectively with the powerful union representing the teachers.

The Task Force believes that improving education in Newark is—as it has long been—arguably the most important and enduring challenge confronting the city's leadership. The economic renaissance now under way will not be sustained if the education provided by the city's schools continues to be perceived as poor in quality. Reversing this obstinate and complex problem demands bold, imaginative, and courageous leadership from City Hall and the Newark School

District and courage by state leaders to fully support the administration they placed in charge of the Newark schools. Civic, community, and business leaders, too, must push for significant reform and support efforts to make dramatic changes in the face of entrenched resistance.

Groups such as the Advocates for Newark's Children, convened by the Prudential Foundation, represent a positive force for much needed change. The Advocates has identified and highlighted barriers to reform and has championed the need for greater accountability in school management. This organization also has drawn attention to the need for Newark's leadership to prepare seriously for the eventual day when the state returns the city's schools to local governance. Its recently published study on the impact of state intervention provides a blueprint for citizen action in school reform. Above all, Newark's citizens must never waver in their insistence upon quality schooling for their children.

Most of those dealing with the challenges of educational reform in Newark have concentrated primarily on issues of school governance and pedagogy (including teacher qualifications and student performance measures). The Task Force, in surveying this landscape, sought to identify ways in which it could provide additional support and encouragement to the school district and its leadership. The



Task Force determined that school facilities and the system's physical infrastructure merited its attention, as this was an area that was receiving less attention from others. The Task Force, therefore, determined that its focus should be directed toward helping the district develop and advance plans for large-scale facility replacement, modernization and improvement—areas that have been too long ignored.

The Task Force, as its exploration of the school facilities issue unfolded, learned that the average age of the city's school buildings is over 80 years. There has been just one new facility constructed in the last 15 years. The long-term deterioration of the school district's physical plant is not only a symbol of the system's

record of chronic failure and a powerfully negative message to children, parents and others regarding the city's commitment to education, the disrepair is in and of itself an intractable barrier to teaching and learning.

In its 1998 decision in the *Abbott* case concerning funding levels in New Jersey's poor school districts and the effects of inadequate funding on educational quality, the state supreme court stated:

"It is undisputed that the school buildings in Abbott districts are crumbling and obsolescent and that this grave state of disrepair not only prevents children from receiving a thorough and efficient education, but also threatens their health and safety. Windows, cracked and off their runners, do not open; broken lighting fixtures dangle precipitously from the ceilings; fire alarms and fire detection systems fail to meet even minimum safety code standards; rooms are heated by boilers that have exceeded their critical life expectancies and are fueled by leaking pumps; electrical connections are frayed; floors are buckled and dotted with falling plaster; sinks are inoperable; toilet partitions are broken and teetering; and water leaks through patchwork roofs into rooms with deteriorating electrical insulation."



"Besides facing these decrepit and dangerous conditions, children in Abbott districts must also contend with gross overcrowding. Some class sizes hover around 40. Due to insufficient space, up to three different classes may be conducted simultaneously within the confines of one room. Libraries and hallways have been pressed into service as general classrooms. Some 'classrooms' are no more than windowless closets converted by necessity into instructional areas. For children in these huddled spaces, 'art' consists of coloring and 'music' consists of singing a song."²⁰

No better description of the condition of Newark's schools could have been written. This is a situation that begs for redress. The Task Force has joined with the Newark School District in appealing to the state commissioner of education to move swiftly but deliberately to respond to the physical deficiencies described by the court. During the Task Force's final year of work, we have continued to monitor the state's response and the evolution of Newark's facilities plans. On this issue, we are in full concurrence with the Education Law Center (ELC), the advocacy group that initiated the *Abbott* litigation on behalf of the state's distressed communities, whose position is that *Abbott* districts must resist

state efforts to reduce the needs-based Facilities Management Plans that were mandated by the supreme court.

The ELC has recognized the Facilities Management Plan prepared by the Newark public schools as one of the best in the state. The Newark Plan calls for the construction of 40 new schools to replace those that have outlived their useful life and for full rehabilitation of the remaining 34 facilities. The Newark Plan

takes a school-by-school approach, based on developing space that meets the state-mandated core curriculum content standards. The plan's price tag would require about \$2 billion of the \$15 billion funding currently under consideration in the legislature.

We also believe the ELC is correct in advising the *Abbott* districts to insist that disputes with the state over these plans be resolved through appeals, not through acquiescence. Clearly, Facility Management Plans should include the preschool facility needs of the district and collaborating providers.

20. *Ahlbrecht v. Barker*, 710 A2d450 (NJ 1998).

NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS—Elementary/Middle—Capacity and Enrollment

Source: The Newark Public Schools Five-Year Facilities Management Plan Summary Report, October 15, 2000

Name of School	Age of School	Capacity as per NJDOE	Enrollment Number
Burnet School	132	370	407
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	128	650	582
Morton Street	149	557	479
Newton Street	134	626	603
Quitman Street	26	900	643
Warren Street	109	308	347
Ann Street	115	805	1096
Hawkins Street	113	494	624
Lafayette Street	152	643	733
Lafayette Street Annex (leased)	126	included in above	included in above
Oliver Street	131	612	735
Wilson Avenue	119	294	854
Avon Avenue	95	488	520
Bragaw Avenue	72	484	394
Hawthorne Avenue	105	510	406
Louise A. Spencer	24	1055	1323
Miller Street	87	665	530
William H. Brown	100	872	460
Chancellor Avenue	330	614	682
Dayton Street	50	702	411
George W. Carver/Bruce Street	21	1168	1119
Maple Avenue	76	467	654
Maple Avenue Annex	46	included in above	included in above
Peshine Avenue	89	879	747
Broadway/Louis Muñoz Marín	44	1111	925
Franklin	111	538	702
McKinley	85	1048	805
Rafael Hernandez	5	564	769
Abington Avenue	100	728	868
Dr. E. Alma Plagg	16	405	605
Dr. William H. Horton	107	713	896
First Avenue	72	583	724
Sussex Avenue	108	351	471
Fifteenth Avenue	109	567	273
South Seventeenth Street	23	578	530
Thirteenth Avenue	29	1378	906
Mount Vernon	46	1024	962



VI. Conclusion

For over three centuries, the City of Newark has, in a variety of changing ways, been an important place in America. As a center of manufacturing, commerce, and finance, Newark has made significant contributions to the economic growth of the region and the nation. As a community that for decades has endured the forces sweeping over many of the nation's old industrial centers, Newark has had to struggle with the causes and effects of urban decline. It was, and very much remains, a doorway to migrants seeking opportunity, freedom, and a new life. From Europe they have come, from the American South, the Caribbean, and, lately, from the four corners of the globe. Through the richness of its ethnic, racial, and cultural heritage, Newark has never abated in its profound role as a fertile breeding ground of American culture, art and entertainment.

Newark has always been a mirror of the struggles, hopes, and achievements of its people. And, as the 21st century dawns, there are strong indications that it is poised for rebirth in terms of economic health, neighborhood revitalization, and cultural significance. But this "new" Newark will not emerge simply because we wish it. To bring about the city's transformation will take the concerted and sustained efforts of all who believe in and care about the city and its people. We believe the recommendations in this report are critical guideposts in this transformative process. We commend them to you for consideration, discussion, and action.

